



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
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(614) 469-6923/FAX (614) 469-6919
March 13, 2003



Heidi Bash
CSX Transportation, Inc.
500 Water Street - J200
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Ms. Bash:

This is in response to your February 28, 2003 letter requesting review of a preliminary Environmental Report describing a proposed CSX Transportation, Inc. rail line abandonment project [Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 631X)] in Akron, Summit County, Ohio.

Although, not included in your report, in our February 24, 2003 letter we concurred that this proposed project is not likely to adversely impact federally-listed species or critical habitats. The following species are federally-listed in Summit County: **Indiana bat** (*Myotis sodalis*), **bald eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and **eastern massasauga** (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*).

In general, we recommend that any potential projects minimize water quality impacts and impacts to high quality fish and wildlife habitat, such as forests, streams, and wetlands. Best construction techniques should be used to minimize erosion, in particular, on slopes. We support and recommend activities that reduce the likelihood of invasive plant spread and encourage native plant colonization. Prevention of non-native, invasive plant establishment is critical in maintaining high quality habitats. All disturbed areas in the project vicinity should be mulched and revegetated with native plant species.

Should additional information on listed or proposed species or their critical habitat become available or if new information reveals effects of the action that were not previously considered, this determination may be reconsidered. If project plans change or if portions of the project were not evaluated, it is our recommendation that you contact our office for further review.

This technical assistance letter is submitted in accordance with provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act, of 1973, as amended, and is consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.

If you have questions, or if we may be of further assistance in this matter, please contact Sarena Selbo at extension 17 in this office.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Knapp, Ph.D.
Supervisor

cc: Surface Transportation Board, SEA, 1925 "K" Street NW - Suite 534, Washington, DC 20423